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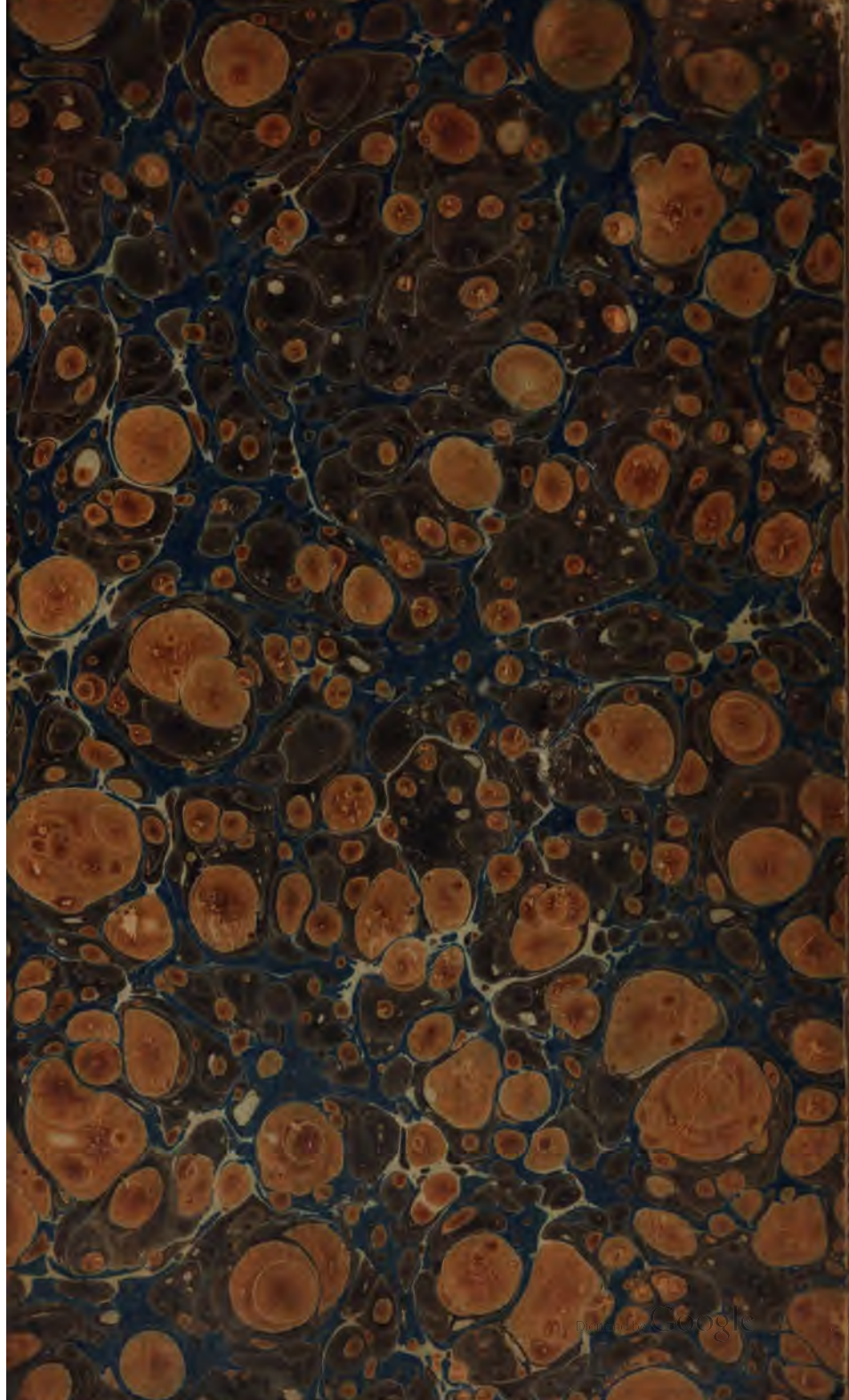
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STORIES  
FROM  
GREEK HISTORY;

*In a Series of Tales*  
RELATED TO HIS SON.

BY  
B. G. NIEBUHR.

—  
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.  
—

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE Translator, in presenting to the English reader the following Tales from Mythological History, cannot but congratulate the English public on the means now afforded them of seeing how a mind so filled with various learning, and the results of deep research, as that of the historian of the Roman Republic, could condescend to the mind of a child, and represent with an almost infantine simplicity those tales—the unexplained traditions of centuries, to which he was the first to supply a key. The object of the translator in the execution of his humble task has been to render the simple diction of the original, and if he be pronounced to have succeeded in this, he will be fully satisfied.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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NIEBUHR relates in a letter \* to his friend Hensler, that he was writing Tales from Greek Mythology for his son Marcus. It is remarkable how such a man conceived these myths which have afforded occupation to the learned, in the form of tales for children, and adapted them to the comprehension of a child four years of age. This circumstance will give a wider interest to these tales than that which they possess merely for Niebuhr's personal friends. They are therefore presented to the public, and it is the especial wish of Niebuhr's son, that they may impart to other children the same pleasure which they have given him. The mere writing, indeed, cannot give the lively interest to these tales which they possessed for the boy; for the tender father painted as it were the events while he narrated them, and the boy, on commencing his actual studies, stepped into a circle of friendly forms already well known to him. He still retains a lively remembrance of the joy with which he hailed a fancied discovery of the cave of Cacus on Aventine, and how he used to compare with his father's narrations the representations of the history of Hercules on sarcophagi and other bass-reliefs.

\* *Lebensnachrichten über B. G. Niebuhr*, vol. ii. p. 485. Letter 452 of 19 Jan. 1822.

# HISTORY

OF THE

## HEROIC AGE IN GREECE.

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### HISTORY OF THE ARGONAUTS.

THERE was a king in Greece whose name was Athamas, and his wife's name Nephele: they had two children, a son and a daughter; they were very good and loved one another very much. The son's name was Phryxus, that of the daughter Helle. The father, however, was a bad man, and drove away his wife, the mother of the good children, and married another wife, whose name was Ino, and who was a bad woman. Ino treated the poor children very ill, and though they were good, she beat them because they cried for their mother. At last she resolved to sacrifice Phryxus, but on his being brought to the altar to be sacrificed, the god Hermes brought a fine large ram which had a fleece of gold, and could run upon the clouds; and upon that ram with the golden fleece Hermes placed Phryxus and his sister Helle, and told them to proceed through the air to the land of Colchis.

The ram knew the way; the children were obliged to hold fast by his horn with one hand, while they twisted the other arm round one another's body: but Helle let go her

brother and fell down into the sea. Phryxus cried bitterly at the loss of his dear sister, but rode safely on, and arrived safe at Colchis. When there, he sacrificed the ram, and nailed the golden fleece to an oak.

After this there reigned in Thessaly another king, who was named Pelias : he had a brother called Aeson, who had a son whose name was Jason, who could beat to the earth all who ventured to contend against him with their fists.

JASON was a young and gallant knight, and dwelt with his father outside the city. Now it had been foretold to King Pelias, that a man who would come to him with one shoe would deprive him of his kingdom. And it happened that King Pelias gave a great feast, to which Jason was invited. In coming into the city Jason had occasion to pass through a brook, there being no bridge over it. There had been that night a terrible thunder storm, and it had rained heavily ; the brook was full of water and greatly swollen, as it was at Albano when the heavy rain fell. The strings of one of Jason's shoes gave way and he lost it in the water, and so he came into the king's house with only one shoe. When King Pelias saw this he was struck with fear, and commanded Jason to quit the country, and not to return unless he brought with him the golden fleece.

JASON was not at all frightened, and invited all knights who were brave and valiant to go with him on the adventure ; for, in order to obtain the fleece it was necessary to fight with wicked monsters and wicked men.

JASON built a great ship for himself and his companions. The goddess MINERVA, who loved him, assisted him in his undertaking ; she gave him a tree for a mast, and when JASON consulted this tree it told him what he was to do.

This ship was named ARGO, and they who sailed in it were called the ARGONAUTS. Amongst the Argonauts was HERCULES ; as likewise two brothers who had wings and could fly through the air ; also a hero named POLLUX.

Sailing away in this ship they reached a country, the king of which was named Amyelus; he was a man of mighty strength, and when strangers came into his country he forced them to fight with him and killed them. But Pollux beat him to the earth and slew him, for he was a very wicked man.

After this the Argonauts came with their ship to a city called Salmydessus, where there dwelt a king whose name was Phineus. This king had made Jupiter angry, and Jupiter to punish him had struck him with blindness, and when he sat down to meals, there came great nasty birds called Harpies. These Harpies had skins of iron like armour, and when Phineus' servants shot or struck at them, they were not able to wound or hurt them: and these creatures had great sharp iron claws with which they tore the people who tried to drive them away. And when the food was put upon the table they came and carried it off, and if they could not carry the whole away, they dirtied the dishes and tables and made a most abominable smell, so that as poor Phineus could never get his meals properly, he was almost starved to death. When the heroes arrived in his country, he informed them of his misfortune, and with many tears implored their help. The heroes bade him sit down to dinner, whereupon, as soon as the meat was put upon the table, the Harpies also made their appearance. Jason and his companions cut away at them lustily, but it was all of no use. Thereupon the two sons of BOREAS, ZETUS and CALAIS, who had wings on their shoulders, soared into the air above the Harpies. The Harpies then became frightened and flew away, the two heroes after them, till at last the Harpies became so overwhelmed with terror that they fell into the sea and were drowned. Zetus and Calais then came back, and poor Phineus after this was left at peace and could eat his meals in comfort.

As soon as the wind was favourable, the heroes again

betook themselves to the ship, in order to sail to Colchis. When they took leave of Phineus, he embraced them and gave them many thanks that they had helped him in his great need, and in return he gave them a piece of most valuable advice. He informed them that on the great sea, over which they had to sail, were two great floating rocks; like the ice mountains which float about in the sea, in parts where there is no summer but where winter always reigns. These rocks, as high as Mount Cavo, when they struck against one another, crushed to pieces whatever happened to be between; fishes that were swimming in the water, or birds that flew in the air were alike struck dead, if they chanced to be between the rocks when they struck together; and if a ship tried to sail between the rocks they suddenly drew together when the ship was in the middle, and dashed it to pieces and destroyed the crew. Jupiter had placed these rocks in the sea purposely, in order that no ship might sail as far as Colchis.

But Phineus knew that the rocks always sprang a considerable way asunder after they had been drawn together, and that they always drew together when a fish swam, or bird flew, or a ship sailed between them. For this reason he gave the Argonauts good advice whereby they might escape the danger, and by following his advice they came off unharmed. I will now tell you how they did it.

On arriving at the place where the rocks floated they saw them lying at a distance from one another, about as far as Mount Cavo is from Rome—but they immediately began to draw near to each other. The Argonauts sailed right towards the space between them, but just as they came up close to them, one of the heroes stood on the prow of the vessel with a dove in his hand and let the dove fly. Now, as I have told you, whenever any living thing passed between the rocks they were necessitated to come together, and immediately afterwards to fly to a distance asunder. The

dove was swift of wing, and the goddess Minerva protected her; she was a good dove and perfectly white. When the rocks struck together her tail only remained between them, this was torn away, but the feathers soon grew again. And now the rocks again separated and were carried to a distance from one another, whereupon the heroes all rowed with their utmost might, and passed through prosperously; when the rocks again came together, they only knocked off a bit of the ship's stern. The dove flew back and perched on the ship, and bore the Argonauts no ill will. After a time Minerva took her and placed her in the heavens, where she now is as a beautiful constellation.

When the Argonauts had passed fortunately through the symplegades they at length entered into the river Phasis, which flows through Colchis. Some remained in the ship, but Jason and Pollux, and many other heroes proceeded to the city where the king dwelt. The king's name was Aetes, and he had a daughter named Medea. Jason informed King Aetes that Pelias had sent them to fetch the golden fleece, and begged him to give it to them. Aetes did not like to lose the fleece, and yet could not refuse it to Jason, for he knew it was fated that he must give it up if any one came from Greece to demand it. Accordingly he told Jason that he should have it, but that he must first yoke the brazen bulls to a plough, and plough up a large piece of land, and then sow the dragons' teeth. These brazen bulls were the work of Vulcan; they moved, and walked and lived like real bulls, but they blew fire from their nostrils and mouths, and were much fiercer and stronger than real bulls; for which reason they were kept in a stable built of iron, and huge stones where they were fastened with strong iron chains. And when the dragons' teeth were put into the earth, as corn is when it is sown, there came up out of the ground iron men all armed with lances and swords, and they destroyed whoever

had sown them. The plan of the king was that the bulls should kill Jason ; and if the bulls did not kill him he felt quite certain that the iron men would.

Now, it happened that the king's daughter Medea saw Jason at her father's house and fell in love with him, and it went to her heart to think that Jason should be killed. She was a sorceress, and knew how to distil magical juices, and she rode in a chariot drawn by winged serpents, and so flying therein through the air she gathered herbs on many hills, and in the vallies on the banks of streams, and having pressed the juice out of all these herbs she prepared it, and then taking it to Jason, without her father's knowing, she desired him to rub his face, hands, arms, and legs with it, and likewise his armour, shield, sword, and lance. By means of which he became for one whole day far stronger than all other heroes, and fire could not burn him, and iron could not wound him, or cut through his armour or shield, while his own sword and lance could cut through iron as though it were butter.

Now, a day having been fixed for Jason to yoke the bulls and sow the dragon's teeth, early in the morning before sunrise came King Æetes with his daughter and his ministers, generals, chamberlains, and courtiers, and took his seat upon his throne close to the place which Jason was to plough, and the rest of the people sat down on benches as they do on the course at the races, and all the multitude came out of the city to see how it would all end, and the boys climbed up into the trees to get the best sight they could of what was going on.

Jason having rubbed himself and his armour with the enchanted juice came to the place. The stable wherein the bulls were kept was close adjoining. The king having ordered the door to be opened, Jason was nowise afraid, but went bravely in. He set loose the bulls from their chains, and seizing one with each hand by the horn, dragged them

forth out of the stable, The bulls roared most terribly, and at the same time the fire rushed out of their mouth and nostrils, together with as much smoke as comes from a burning house or Mount Vesuvius when it vomits fire. At this the wicked king was greatly pleased, but such of the spectators as were good people were sadly distressed, for they saw how handsome and brave Jason was, and they expected he would be killed; they did not know that Medea was befriending him. Jason pressed both bulls by the head to the ground, upon which they struck out violently with the hind feet, but Jason pressed still more strongly, and brought them down upon their knees.

The plough to which they were to be yoked was made wholly of iron. Pollux having brought it, threw the yoke over their necks and a chain over their horns; in the mean time Jason pressed their mouths and noses into the ground that they could not blow. As soon as Pollux had made all ready and yoked them to the plough, he sprang nimbly away, and Jason seized the chain in one hand and the handle of the plough in the other and let their horns go; the bulls sprang up, and tried to rush away, but Jason held the chain so firmly that they were obliged to go quite slowly, and to plough quite orderly and steadily. Just as they were yoked the sun rose, and by the time noon had arrived Jason had ploughed the entire field. Thereupon he unyoked the bulls and let them loose, so terrified were they, that they darted off like a cat that has been whipped, and they ran without once looking behind them, till they reached the hills. There they would have set all the forests on fire, if Vulcan had not come and caught them and taken them away.

No sooner had Jason finished ploughing than he went to King Æetes and desired him to deliver him the teeth. Dragons and snakes have their whole mouth full of small teeth, and Æetes gave Jason a brass helmet full of teeth. Jason took them out with his hand, walked up and down the



field, and cast the teeth in all directions; then he took his large spear and beat the clods of earth to pieces, and made the ground even as a gardener does when he has been sowing. After which he went and laid down to rest till evening, for he was very tired.

Towards sunset he came to the field again, and behold the iron men were growing up on all sides. Some had grown out as far as the feet, others as far as the knee, others to the hips, others to the shoulders, while of some the helmet and forehead alone were to be seen; the rest was still fixed fast in the earth. As in the paintings of the creation of the animals, nothing of the horse but its head is to be seen above the earth. Those who had got their arms out of the earth and could move them, shook their spears, and cut with their swords. Some of them could already even get their feet loose from the ground and tried to get at Jason.

Jason now did as his friend Medea had advised him; he took a great stone and threw it into the field, into the midst of the iron men. As soon as they saw it they rushed at it to seize it. I think it was a fine large marble block: upon this they began to quarrel, because every one wanted to have it, and they began to cut and thrust at one another, and as soon as any one of them got his feet free from the ground he hastened to the spot, and so they went on till at last they all killed one another; and in the mean time Jason went about the field and cut off the heads of those who were still growing up. In this way all the iron men perished. King Æetes was frantic with rage; but Medea and the heroes, and all the spectators rejoiced greatly.

On the following morning, Jason went to King Æetes and demanded to have the fleece given up to him; but the king instead of giving it to him, desired him to come again another time. In the mean time he meant to have Jason murdered. Medea informed Jason of this, and also told him, that if he meant to have the fleece he must fetch it himself.

otherwise he would never get it. The fleece was nailed to an oak, at the foot of which lay a dragon that slept not by night or by day, and who devoured any one who attempted to touch the fleece except King Æetes: this dragon was immortal, so that Medea could not by her help enable Jason to destroy it. But the dragon was very fond of nice sweet cakes, so Medea gave Jason a cake sweetened with honey; into this cake she had poured a certain juice which was sure to put the dragon to sleep. Jason came with his cake and threw it to the dragon; the stupid dragon ate the whole greedily up, and immediately fell fast asleep. Jason stept over the dragon's body, tore out the nails by which the fleece was fastened with a pair of tongs, took down the fleece from the tree, threw his cloak over it, and carried it away to the ship. Medea went with him, she became his wife, and accompanied him to Greece.

Æetes believed that the Argonauts would sail back by the same way they had come, and sent out many ships to attack them, but they went a different way: they proceeded up the great river Danube, and then they carried Argo till they came to the ocean which flows round the whole earth, and launching the ship therein, they sailed round the earth and so came to Colchis again. In the mean time the Colchians waited near the Symplegades which now stood quite still, until at length, as the Argo did not arrive, they returned home. King Æetes was terribly enraged; he had lost the fleece, and the brazen bulls, and the dragon's teeth, and his daughter was gone also, and had taken all her ornaments and precious things, and all the world ridiculed and laughed at him.

When Medea reached Thessaly with Jason, she restored the old Aeson to youth, so that his white hair became dark again, and his teeth came again, and he grew strong again like a young man, and he lived many years. Pelias she killed, and Aeson became king in his stead.

## STORIES OF HERCULES.

HERCULES was the son of Jupiter and Alcmena: Amphitryo was Alcmena's husband, and king of Thebes in Greece. Amphitryo was the stepfather of Hercules, but he was as fond of him as though he had been his own son. Amphitryo and Alcmena had a son whose name was Iphicles, so he was Hercules' stepbrother.

Hercules and Iphicles did not lie in a cradle, but in a large brazen shield. In this their mother had made a bed for them, and when they wanted to sleep, they were rocked in the shield. Hercules never cried: when he was little his name was not Hercules, but Alcæus or Alcides.

Juno was his mother, Alcmena's enemy, and wished to get Hercules killed. It was midnight, and Amphitryo and Alcmena were asleep, and the two boys also were asleep in the shield, which stood beside their mother's bed. Then there crawled two large snakes through a hole under the door into the bedroom, and crawled towards the shield. The eyes of the snakes glittered like fire, so that the whole bedroom was as light as though a large fire had been kindled in it. They raised up their heads on the side where Hercules lay, and wanted to crawl into the shield and bite him. Upon this the shield moved of itself, and Iphicles awoke, and set up a terrible cry, because he was frightened. His cries awakened Alcmena, who saw the light in the room and woke her husband Amphitryo, who sprung up quickly and took his sword, which hung on a nail behind the bed.

When Hercules saw the snakes he was not at all afraid,

and did not cry, but laughed, and with each hand seized a snake by the throat, and squeezed them quite hard. Now they could not bite them, so they twisted their tails about him but Hercules held them so tight that they died. When they were dead their eyes were no longer bright, and when Amphytrio came it was all quite dark again. Then he called to the servant to bring him a light, and when the light came Hercules shewed the two dead snakes, and laughed with delight.

Hercules was very tall and stout, even while a child, and ate a great deal of bread and meat, but no sweetmeats. He learned to read and to write, and to ride, and to drive two-horse and four-horse chariots, and to shoot with the bow, and to hurl javelins at the mark, and to wrestle and fight with the cestus\*. There was a good Centaur, whose name was Chiron, who taught him the knowledge of the stars, and of plants and herbs, and told him about them, and about animals, all of which Hercules was fond of hearing, and he learned everything very well. He was very good, and his only fault was that he became mad when he was angry, and then he was wicked, and afterwards he wept sore for what he had done, but it was too late and he could not make it good again. Alcmena and Amphytrio had not punished him for it when he was young. He had a master whose name was Linus, who taught him to play on the guitar, and as Hercules was inattentive Linus struck him, and Hercules was so angry at this that he took the guitar, and struck Linus on the head with it, so that he died.

Then Amphytrio would keep him at home no longer and sent him to his herds of cattle on mount Citheron. This mountain is not far from Thebes, and was all overgrown with woods, and there the cattle went to graze. In the wood there lived a large and very fierce lion that had torn in

\* Cestus—a kind of glove covered with iron with which the ancient Greeks used to fight.

pieces many bullocks, and many herdsmen as well as others, and Hercules killed him with an iron club. Upon this Amphitryo allowed him to come home again to Thebes.

The Thebans were bound to give a hundred oxen every year to the king of the Minyans, but Hercules did not like that his city should have to pay tribute, and when the king of the Minyans sent heralds to ask for the oxen, Hercules cut off their noses and ears, and drove them out. Then king Erginus marched with a great host against Thebes. The king of Thebes, whose name was Creon, was a coward, and had no heart to meet the enemy, and for this reason he had paid the tax: he made Hercules general, which greatly delighted the Thebans, who were now ready to enter upon the war with spirit: and Minerva gave Hercules a suit of armour. Mercury gave him a sword, and Apollo a bow and arrows, and the coat of mail that Minerva gave him was of gold. Hercules and the Thebans were victorious over the enemy, and killed king Erginus; and the Minyans, the name of whose city was Orchomenos, had now to give the Thebans a hundred oxen every year. Creon gave Hercules his daughter Megara to wife, who bare him three children, and Hercules lived happily at Thebes for some years. But Juno struck him with a sore disease, so that he became mad, and believed that his children were beasts of prey: so that he took his bow and shot them dead. And when he had done it he saw that they were his children, and he could not be comforted, and ran out of the city into the woods.

When the ancients did not know what to do, they went to the Oracles and asked Apollo for advice. The Oracles were temples, where a priest or a priestess sat, to whom people put questions, and whom Apollo told what answer they were to make. If a king thought of beginning a war he sent to an oracle, and if Apollo told him that he would be beaten, he let the war alone.

The best oracle was at Delphi, where a priestess sat in

the temple on a tripod, and answered all who came: and if they listened to the Oracle, and it went well with them, they made presents of beautiful things in gold, silver, or brass to the temple, which was quite full of them. The priestess was called the Pythia, and Delphi lies in Greece at the foot of Mount Parnassus.

Poor Hercules came to Delphi, and went into the temple, and asked the Pythia what he should do, for he was so grieved at having killed his children. The Pythia told him that he must go to the city Tiryns, and serve king Eurystheus, and do patiently all that he commanded him. She told him that Eurystheus would appoint him twelve labours, which were so perilous that he would run the risk of being killed in each one of them; if however he was courageous and patient the gods would help him; and when he had surmounted the twelve labours, he would again be happy, and after his death become a god.

King Eurystheus was a base and wicked man, and had no courage, and did nothing good, and hated all who could do good and noble deeds. Hercules went away patiently to Tiryns, and came before king Eurystheus, and told him that Apollo had commanded him through the Pythia to serve him, and that he would do all that he commanded him.

Then king Eurystheus said that he must go to Nemea and kill the lion. Nemea was a valley with a thick wood between high mountains, in the country of Eurystheus: in this wood there dwelt a very fierce lion, whose skin was so strong that no iron could wound him, and when the herdsmen threw spears at him, they fell down without doing the lion any harm, and the lion sprang upon them and tore them to pieces. Hercules placed himself in the wood, as hunters do, behind the trees, that the beast of prey might not see him when he was going to shoot. Then the lion came through the wood, he had been devouring the flocks, and his mouth and his jaws were covered

with blood: with his great tongue he licked the blood about his mouth and roared. When a lion roars in the wood, it sounds like thunder, and the earth trembles. With his tail he lashed his sides and the trees. Hercules shot, but the arrow could not pierce the lion's skin, and yet if he had shot at a man in armour, the arrow would have gone through the coat of mail and through the man's body. Then the lion saw Hercules, and sprang upon him. When a lion springs he crouches, and lies with his belly on the ground, and draws his tail between his hind legs: he can spring as far the whole length of our room.

Hercules wrapped his cloak about his left arm to keep him off, and in his right hand he took a large club which he had cut in the wood, and with this he struck the lion on the head. The lion, however, was not killed, but stood upon his feet—but he was quite frightened. Then Hercules sprang upon him, and held his neck between his arms, and lifted him up and strangled him: he stood with his feet on the hind legs of the lion. When the lion was dead, he stripped off his skin and put it on: the lion's jaws he placed upon his head as though it were a helmet, and the skin of the fore paws he tied in a knot round his neck. His club was broken to pieces in striking the lion over the head, the animal's bones were so strong. Then he cut himself another club, and always went about with the club and the lion's skin.

Hercules now came back to Tiryns, and sent word to the king that the lion was dead. Then Eurystheus was sore afraid of him, and had a chamber of brass made for himself under ground, into which he went down when Hercules came; and there was a grating in it, through which he spoke to him, and commanded him to go and kill the Hydra of Lerna. This Hydra was a large snake, as long as a ship, which had nine heads, and lived in the marsh of Lerna. Hercules got into a chariot, and his friend Iolaus managed the horses, and they went away to Lerna.

The Hydra crawled away from Hercules, who took his bow, and rolled tow with pitch and sulphur round the arrows and set fire to it, and shot at the Hydra into the hole where she had crawled under ground. Then she came out of the hole and attacked Hercules, Hercules seized her round the neck with his hand, where the nine heads were, but she twisted her tail about one of his legs. Hercules struck her with his club over her heads, and clove them in two, but when one head was crushed, there grew up two others in its place. There came too a terrible large lobster, that pinched Hercules' leg, around which the snake had twisted, and held it fast with his claws, and gave it great pain; he was a friend of the Hydra, and wanted to help her, but Hercules crushed him with the other foot. He kept striking the Hydra on her heads with the club and new heads kept growing in their place, and he never would have killed her if his friend Iolaus had not been with him. He cut down trees, and laid the pieces together, and made a large fire; then he took large burning pieces, and when Hercules had crushed a head, he burnt it with them; so then no others grew up in its place. When all the heads had been cleft, the Hydra was dead, and Hercules dipped the points of the arrows in her blood, which was so poisonous that if an arrow only grazed the skin it killed man or beast. This was the second labour that Hercules accomplished at the bidding of Eurystheus, as Apollo had commanded him.

Then Eurystheus bade him catch the stag of Cerynia, and bring it alive. This stag had golden antlers, and ran so fast that neither horse nor hound could overtake him; but Hercules ran just as fast as he was strong; he ran a whole year after the stag till he caught him, and carried him on his shoulders to Tiryns. This was the third labour.

After this Eurystheus desired him to bring the wild boar of Erymanthus alive. Erymanthus is a mountain in Arcadia, where this boar lived, and he ran into all the cornfields and gardens and ravaged them, and when the people went



against him with spears, he threw them down, and wounded them so with his great tusk that they died. Hercules set off to Erymanthus, but on his way he came in the evening to a cave where the Centaur Pholus lived, and wished to pass the night there. There lived many Centaurs there on the mountain, who had always a large wine cask, that was in the cave of Pholus, and they drank the wine only when they met together in the cave of Pholus, and feasted. Pholus had no other wine, and when Hercules, after he had eaten with him, asked him for wine, he said, that if he drew any for him out of the cask, the other Centaurs would all come and kill him. Hercules said that that would be sure not to happen, and drew for himself a jug full of wine. It was not, however, such wine as we drink, but Bacchus had given it to the Centaurs, and it had a sweet smell like the finest roses, and so strong that when it was drawn from the cask it might be smelt as far as a man can see. Thus the Centaurs smelt it, and they came running up forthwith to kill Pholus: some tore off large pieces of rock, others tore up pines and firs from the ground, for the Centaurs did not fight with swords and lances, and only a few had bows and arrows. Hercules placed himself at the entrance of the cave, and threw firebrands at the Centaurs, and bent his bow, and shot with the arrows, whose heads had been dipped in the blood of the Lernæan Hydra, and those that he hit with them died immediately, as though the Hydra herself had bitten them. Then the rest fled. Pholus wondered that a little arrow could kill so great a creature, and drew an arrow out of one of the Centaurs who lay dead, and looked at it, but he was careless and let the arrow fall out of his hand, and the arrow fell upon his foot, and he died instantly. Hercules had pursued the flying Centaurs, and when he came back he found poor Pholus dead. Then he was sore troubled that he had opened the wine cask against his wish, and he burnt his corpse, and buried his ashes and his bones.

After this he went on to Erymanthus, and thought that the boar would run upon him, as upon other huntsmen, and then he would seize him : but the boar was afraid of him, and ran away. Hercules ran after him, and the boar kept still before him, and in his fear leapt into a ravine that was full of snow, for the snow lies deep on the mountains of Arcadia as on the Alps. Hercules had a noose made of strong rope, which he threw over his legs and body as he struggled to get out, and drew him up, and threw him over his shoulders and carried him to Tiryns. The boar lay on his back, with his legs in the air, and grunted and struggled with his head and legs, but he could not get loose. This was the fourth labour.

Then Eurystheus commanded him to cleanse the stable of Augeas in one day. Augeas was king of Elis and had three thousand oxen, that had a stable as large as the Mount Palatine—it was a court, and round about it went a wall with vaulted stalls, and there the oxen were driven from the field of an evening. The servants of King Augeas were slothful, and let the dung lie, and it was so high that the oxen could no longer go into the stalls, and it would have been a whole year's work to dig it out and take it away. Then Hercules dug a deep ditch as far as the walls of the courtyard, and he brought into the garden two strong streams of water that came from the mountains, and then he made a great hole in wall : then the water streamed into the courtyard ; and now he made another hole in the wall on the other side, where the water ran out again, and washed all the dung away, and the whole courtyard became clean in a day, so that the pavement was quite clean, like the pavement of the streets in Albano, after the stream of rain had washed away all the dirt, when the people swept the dirt and straw into the street that the rain might take it away.

And before this the dung had lain as deep as our room is high. Augeas had promised Hercules a tenth part of his oxen, if he cleansed the stable for him in one day as he told

him that he would do, but he was a bad man and did not keep his word, and he was afterwards punished for this, when Hercules had accomplished all his labours for Eurystheus, for Hercules then came and made war against him and killed him. This was the fifth labour.

After this Eurystheus commanded him to drive away the birds from the Marsh of Stymphalus. These birds had iron beaks and claws like the Harpies, and their bite was fatal to men and animals, and when they had devoured them they flew away to the marsh. The marsh was like a large lake, and looked like a lake, except that many trees stood in it like a great wood; people could not use a boat upon it because the water was not deep, but it was thick mud, and people could not walk in it, for when they set their foot upon it they sank down in the mud. So even Hercules could not have driven out these fierce birds, unless good Vulcan had helped him. He made a rattle of brass, and gave it Hercules, who placed himself with the rattle on a mountain near the marsh, and turned it round, and it made such a terrible noise that the birds were frightened, and they all flew away. As they flew Hercules took his bow and shot at them, and killed some, and the rest were so frightened that they flew far away over the sea, and never came back. This was the sixth labour.

After this Eurystheus commanded him to bring the savage bull from Crete. Hercules went with a ship to Crete, and asked Minos the king of the Island of Crete to let him catch the bull, and Minos gladly gave him leave, for the bull ravaged the country and no man could fight with him. But Hercules seized him by the horns, and dragged him along, and brought him to the ship, and came again to Peloponnese, and dragged the bull to Tiryns. Neptune forbade him to kill the bull and so he ran away again, and did much mischief in all the country, until Theseus killed him. This was the seventh labour.

After this Eurystheus commanded him to bring the horses

of King Diomede from Thrace. Hercules went again with a ship and came to Thrace. The horses were very fierce and devoured men, and King Diomede was so cruel that he threw to the horses the strangers that came to his country; these horses tore them in pieces and devoured them, just as tigers and fierce wolves do. Diomede would not give the horses when Hercules asked for them, so Hercules killed him and let his own horses devour him. He brought the horses on board his ship and took them to Tiryns: but Eurystheus let them run away: when they reached the woods the beasts of prey tore them in pieces, and this was the end of these fierce animals. This was the eighth labour

The Amazons were a nation of nothing but women, who rode on horses and made war, and were as brave as heroes: their queens name was Hippolyta, and she had a girdle of gold with precious stones in it, which Mars had given to her. Eurystheus had heard of this girdle, and wished to have it for its daughter Admeta, and commanded Hercules to bring it. Hercules made it known in Greece that he was going to make war upon the Amazons, and that brave men might go with him. He went with a ship, and took with him those who had come to him. When he reached the country of the Amazons he let Queen Hippolyta know what Eurystheus had sent him for. Hippolyta knew that Hercules was bound to obey Eurystheus, because Apollo had so commanded him, and was willing to give him the girdle; but the Amazons would not suffer it, and attacked Hercules and his companions. Then there was a great battle fought, which is represented on many bas-reliefs; the Amazons fought on horseback, Hercules and his comrades on foot, and if Hercules had not been there the women would have conquered. But Hercules put them to flight, and took Hippolyta prisoner; but he did her no harm, and let her go again as soon as he had got her girdle.

Then he returned with the ship and sailed back to Greece; and at Troy he cast anchor and went ashore into the city.

At that time Laomedon was king of Troy, and he was very rich and powerful, but Apollo and Neptune were his enemies, and they had brought him and his kingdom into great distress. And it had come to pass thus. Troy was a large city and had no walls; then came Apollo and Neptune to Laomedon, and said they would build him walls round the city which no enemy could destroy, if he would pay them for their labour. King Laomedon believed that they were men, and agreed with them what he should give them if they built the walls. Apollo and Neptune built the walls strong and high of huge pieces of rock; when they were done, Laomedon who was a bad man said that he would give them nothing for it, for he believed that they were heroes, and he knew that no enemy could take the walls. The gods wanted to see whether Laomedon would keep his word or not. Upon this Neptune sent a monster, that rose every day out of the sea, and tore men and animals in pieces, and nobody ventured to go out of the city, and as the land was no longer tilled, famine and great distress came upon them, and the Trojans were for killing the king who was the cause of this great misfortune. The king sent to the Oracle, and asked what he should do that the monster might come no more out of the sea, and the Oracle commanded him to bind his daughter Hesione to a rock on the shore, and that the monster would devour her, and then never return. When Hercules arrived they were taking poor Hesione to the place where she was to be fastened. Hercules told the king that he need not fear for his daughter, for he would subdue the monster; but if he killed it, Laomedon was to give him the horses which he had received from Jupiter; they were the finest in the whole world. Laomedon said that he would give them to him. Then Hercules made them all go into the city, and he himself remained near Hesione, and when the monster rose out of the sea, and was going to rush on Hesione, he seized it and killed it, and brought Hesione back to her father. But he was so base that he did

not give Hercules the horses. Hercules was angry, but he would not begin a war, because he had not yet completed all the labours, which the gods had appointed him. So he sent word to Laomedon that he would punish him hereafter, and sailed to Tiryns, and gave the girdle to Eurystheus. This was the ninth labour.

Near Spain there lies an island, on which now stands the city of Cadiz, which was then called Erythia, and as yet there was no city there, but it was all very fine pasture ground with excellent grass, on which the oxen of King Geryon fed. These oxen were the finest in all the world, and were all of a red colour, and the dog that guarded them was called Orthus, and he had two heads, and was so strong that he could fight with two wolves at once, and kill them. King Geryon was like three great giants grown into one, and had three heads, six arms, and six legs. It was no easy matter for any one to take the oxen, even if he had killed the dog: and so Eurystheus thought that Hercules would certainly lose his life. For this reason he commanded him to bring Geryon's oxen. Hercules set off alone, and took his bow and his club. He went through Libya, where the sun's rays are dreadfully hot, and he was angry with the god of the sun who drove his chariot just over the country, and told him to drive aside and not to burn him so. The god of the sun, whose name in Greek was Helios, laughed and answered that that was his road. Hercules was very angry, and bent his bow to shoot at Helios; and at that time he was only a man, and could not have overcome Helios. But Helios was glad that Hercules was so courageous, and told him that he must bear the heat patiently, but he would lend him his own golden ship, to cross the sea in it to Erythia. For between Libya and Europe flows the sea over which your grandfather sailed, and the two great rocks, one of which stands on each shore are called even to this day "The Pillars of Hercules." As Hercules sailed upon the ocean, the god Oceanus wished to

try whether Hercules could be frightened, and caused a great storm to arise. Hercules again bent his bow, and then Oceanus was frightened, and made the sea calm again.

Hercules landed on the island of Erythia, and killed the dog Orthus, and the herdsman Eurytion likewise, and he had well deserved it, for he allowed the oxen to devour men, as King Diomedes did his horses. After this he drove the oxen away. King Geryon heard of it, and came to fight with Hercules, but this did not do him any good, for Hercules shot him dead.

Hercules drove the oxen through Spain, and through Liguria, and the Ligyes came all together, many thousands of them, to take away the oxen from him, and all shot arrows and threw stones at him. When they came near him he killed them, but they shot at him, and threw stones at him from a distance, and then Hercules could only use his arrows. As they were so many, he would have shot away all his arrows, and they would have killed him at last, if his father Jupiter had not helped him. But he made it rain stones which killed many of the Ligyes, and Hercules gathered up the rest and threw them at the raining; and even to this day the field is seen which is quite full of stones, in Provence in France, and the field is called Crau.

Then Hercules drove the oxen over the Alps, and made a road for them over the snow and the ice, and then he came with them to the Tiber, where Rome now stands, but at that time there was no city here, and under the Aventine there dwelt in a cave a cruel giant, whose name was Cacus, who breathed fire out of his mouth and nostrils, and was the scourge of all around. He came by night and stole some of the finest oxen, and drew them into his cave, and that Hercules might not see by the footsteps, that he had brought them there, he drew them by the tail backwards, and so the footsteps looked as though the oxen had gone out of the cave.

Hercules sought the stolen oxen on all sides, and when he could not find them, he went away with the rest. As he drove them past the fort of the Aventine, along the street which leads from Porta San Paolo to Bocca della Verita, one of Hercules oxen bellowed, and when those that were stolen and were shut up in the cave heard it, they answered. Cacus had blocked up the entrance with large pieces of rock, which Hercules tore away, and as Cacus could not escape, he breathed out fire upon Hercules, but he was not afraid and killed him.

At last when he came to the Iathmus, and was not far from Tiryns, where the road is quite narrow between steep rocks and the sea, a cruel giant fell upon him, whose name was Alcyoneus, and threw a stone at him which was so heavy that if it had lain on a waggon, four and twenty buffaloes could scarcely have drawn it; but Hercules made light of it, and warded off the stone with his club: and even to this day the stone lies where it fell. On the day after he came to Tiryns, and the base Eurystheus got the fine oxen. This was the tenth labour, and it had been a very troublesome one for Hercules.

Then Eurystheus commanded Hercules to bring him the golden apples of the Hesperides. When Juno married Jupiter, she gave him some golden apples, which he put in the ground in the garden of the nymphs, who are called Hesperides, and from them grew trees which bore golden apples. Many would have liked to steal them, and for this reason the Hesperides themselves had to watch the garden, and they kept there a great dragon that had a hundred heads. But Hercules did not even know where the garden was, and had to wander about many days before he learned where it was.

On the road Antæus met him, who was a son of the earth, and was very strong, and wrestled with all he met and killed them: for if any one was so strong as to throw Antæus



to the ground, he sprang up again immediately, because the earth was his mother, and always made him stronger when he touched her; and when he had thrown his antagonist he killed him. When Hercules observed that Antæus became stronger when he threw him on the earth, he held him up in his arms so high, that he did not touch the earth even with his feet, and he squeezed him so tight in his arms that Antæus died.

After this he came to Egypt, where Busiris was king, who offered all strangers on the altar as victims. Hercules let them bind his hands, and place a fillet about his head like a victim, and led him to the altar, and sprinkled salt and meal upon his head; but when the priest would have taken the knife and stabbed him, he tore asunder the cords with which they had bound his hands, and killed the priests and the cruel king Busiris.

As Hercules was so large and strong, he had likewise a very great appetite; once when he was very hungry he met a countryman who was ploughing with a yoke of oxen, and asked him to give him something to eat, but the countryman would give him nothing. At this Hercules was very angry with him, and drove him away, and took the yoke off the oxen and killed one of them, and broke the plough in pieces, and made a fire with the wood of the plough, and with it he roasted the ox and ate it all up.

Then he came to Caucasus which is a very high mountain towards sun-rising; on a cliff of this mountain which was quite steep, and so high that nobody could reach it, Jupiter had had Prometheus fastened with chains, and every day there came an eagle that fed upon his side. Hercules took his bow and shot the eagle dead, and asked Jupiter to set Prometheus free, and Jupiter did so, and Prometheus came again to Olympus among the other gods.

At last he came to Atlas, who stood upon the edge of the earth, and bore up the vault of heaven with his shoulders,

that it might not fall upon the earth: Atlas was the brother of the father of the Hesperides, and Hercules asked him to persuade his nieces to give him the apples. Hercules was not afraid of the dragon, and would have killed it; but he did not wish to take away the apples from the nymphs by force. Atlas went to the Hesperides, and till he came back, Hercules took the vault of heaven on his shoulders. The Hesperides gave their uncle three apples to give to Hercules, on condition that he promised that they should have them again, for all knew that Hercules did what he promised. When Atlas came back he wanted to make Hercules always stand there and support the heavens, but Hercules threatened to let them fall, and then Atlas took them again, and gave him the apples. Hercules carried them to Eurystheus, and told him that he had promised to give them back, and Eurystheus would have liked to keep them, but he knew that Jupiter would then allow Hercules to punish him, and so he gave them back to Hercules, and he took them to Minerva, and she sent them to the Hesperides. This was the eleventh labour.

He had now but one labour more, and when that was finished he was free, and Eurystheus could command him no more. Then he ordered him to bring him up the dog Cerberus from the lower world.

Hercules went to Tænarus. This is a high promontory in Greece, and in the rock there are great clefts and caverns, through which you may go down into the lower world; and Hercules kept going further and further down till he came to the river Styx, which flows round the whole of the lower world, where Pluto was king. There is no bridge over the river, but Charon ferries people across in a boat. Charon said Hercules was too big and heavy, and that the boat would not bear him, but he was obliged to obey. Mercury conducted him, and shewed him the way. When he had crossed the stream there appeared to him the head of Medusa or the

Gorgon, which turned into stone all who were frightened at it; but Hercules was not afraid of it, and drew his sword and thrust at it, and it fled away. Cerberus would instantly have torn in pieces any other living man, but when he saw Hercules he began to howl, and hid himself under Pluto's throne.

Hercules wished to offer a sacrifice to the gods, and Pluto had a large herd of oxen, so he took a bull to slay it. The herdsman, Menæti<sup>us</sup> came running up and struck at him. Then he seized him and squeezed him so fearfully that he would have crushed his bones, had not Proserpine begged that he would let him go. Pluto and Proserpine gave Hercules a friendly greeting, and told him that he was welcome to take Cerberus, if he could master him, and would promise to bring him back. Cerberus was as big as an elephant, and had three heads, and on his heads a mane of snakes, and his tail was a great snake. Hercules had put on his armour that Vulcan had given him, and wrapped the lion's skin tight about him, and seized Cerberus by the neck, and drew him along; the snake which was the dog's tail, kept biting him, but Hercules did not let go, and went up again through the caverns through which he had come down, and when Cerberus came up and saw the light, he was at first quite raving, and the foam ran out of his mouth, and when it fell there grew poisonous herbs, which killed those who ate them. All who saw Cerberus fled, and Eurystheus hid himself; upon which Hercules brought the dog back again, and gave it to Charon to ferry it in his boat over to the other bank of the Styx.

This was the twelfth and last labour, and now Hercules was again free. But his father would not let him live at ease without using the strength that he had given him to punish the wicked and help those who suffered wrong; but he was to toil as long as he lived on earth, and was to control his anger, and if he did not do so, he was to be punished for it,

as he was when he served Eurystheus; and if he was good at last he would take him up into heaven, and reward him richly for all the troubles he had undergone on earth.

Hercules could easily have punished the base Eurystheus for all his ill treatment of him; but he knew that he had borne the servitude as a punishment, and went away from Tiryns without doing him any harm.

In the Island of Eubœa there was a city Œechalia, and the name of the king of this city was Eurytus: he was a capital shot with the bow, and his sons shot as well as himself; and he had proclaimed throughout Greece that no one should have his daughter Iole to wife, who did not shoot farther than himself and his sons and hit the mark. Iole was very beautiful, and many had come to Œechalia to try their skill at shooting with the bow, but none could shoot so well as Eurytus and the Eurytidæ. Then Hercules also came and shot better than they did; but Eurytus did not keep his word, and did not give Hercules Iole to wife. At this Hercules was very angry, for when he promised anything, he always kept his word, and desired that every body else should do the same: but he controled his anger and went away to Thessaly.

King Admetus of the city of Pheræ in Thessaly was a dear friend of Hercules, and Hercules went to his house to sleep and eat there. But when he came into the house he found all sore troubled and in tears. For King Admetus had been very ill, and would have died, had not his wife Alcestis, who was in sound health, obtained permission from the gods to die for her husband. So she was dead, and Admetus was alive and well. But when he was well again, and heard that his wife had died for him, he was greatly troubled and would rather that he had even died, so that Alcestis might have lived. Hercules came as good fortune would have it, before the body was burned, and went in haste down to the lower world, and besought Pluto so earnestly, that he set the

soul of Alcestis free again : it came back into her body, which again became alive and warm, and Alcestis lived long after with her husband Admetus, and both were grateful to Hercules as their greatest benefactor as long as they lived. If Pluto at his earnest prayer had not let the soul of Alcestis go, Hercules would have used force, although all the gods were afraid of Pluto.

After this Iphitus, one of the sons of Eurytus came to Hercules, to beg him to help him in looking after his father's oxen, which that sly thief Antolycus had stolen, who could change all that he had stolen into another form, so that the owners did not recognize it again when they saw it. Hercules believed that this was a trick of Eurytus to entice him to Eubœa, and he was likewise very angry that a man who had behaved so basely towards him, should have the insolence to desire him to give himself any trouble on his account : but he was too furious, and took Iphitus by the arms and threw him over the walls of the city, so that he fell upon his head and died. Jupiter was very angry at this, that Hercules should have forgotten again that he ought to control his anger, and employ his strength to help other men : so he punished Hercules with a violent fever, and during the fever he became mad and ran to Delphi to ask the oracle of Apollo how he might become well again. Apollo would not answer him ; so Hercules took away the tripod on which the Pythia sat when she delivered the oracle, and would have destroyed the temple. Then Apollo sprang forth from the adytum, and bent his bow against Hercules, and Hercules against him : but Jupiter hurled his thunderbolt between them both, and commanded Apollo to deliver the oracle. Apollo said that if Hercules allowed himself to be sold as a slave for three years, he would recover from his sickness and madness. This was very hard, but Hercules was now again obedient and allowed himself to be sold, and Omphale Queen of Lydia bought him. She mocked Hercules, and made him put on a

woman's dress, and spin, and sit among her women, and she herself wore his lion's skin. But she was not so cruel as Eurystheus, and did not command him to engage in such dreadful labours.

When the three years were over, Hercules was again free, and came back to Greece, and assembled heroes and other warriors to punish king Laomedon. He could not destroy the walls of the city because Apollo and Neptune had built them, but he and his comrades mounted them with ladders : Laomedon was killed and Hercules gave his daughter Hesione to his friend Telamon to wife, who had first mounted the walls with him. Hercules did not destroy the city of Troy, but made a son of Laomedon king there, whose name was Priam. Priam was the father of Paris, who carried off the beautiful Helen, and of Hector, who defended Troy when Agamemnon and Menelaus lead the Greeks to the war, and Priam was killed when Troy was taken.

After this, Minerva called him to Phlegra, which is the beautiful country round Naples, on this side of Vesuvius, where at that time there were very insolent giants, who waged war against the gods, and Hercules fought for the gods against the giants. At last the gods conquered, and Jupiter threw the Island of Sicily on their king Typhœus, so that he could not come up again ; but the Greeks said, that when he wanted to raise himself, and throw off the burden that lay upon him, it gave rise to earthquakes in Italy. When this struggle was over, Hercules went again to Greece, and came to Œneus, the king of Calydon ; he had a very beautiful daughter Deianira, whom Hercules wished to marry, and Œneus would have gladly given her to him to wife, but the river god Achelous likewise wished to marry her, and Hercules had to fight with him. When Achelous was conquered, he changed himself into a frightful dragon, which Hercules seized with his hands by the neck ; then he changed himself into a monstrous bull and tried to gore

Hercules with his horns; but Hercules seized his horns with his hands, and broke one off. Then Achelous besought him that he would do him no more harm, and Hercules married Deianira, and took her with him. At that time he no longer used the club which he had made in the wood out of a wild olive tree when he fought with the lion, but he had fixed it in the earth and consecrated it to the gods: it took root, and sent forth leaves and branches, and the tree to which it grew stood even at the time of Marcus Aurelius.

Hercules wished to bring Deianira to a city called Trachin, and on the road they had to go over the river Evenus, which is very broad and deep after rain, and there was no boat there: Hercules himself went through the river, but a Centaur named Nessus, who lived by the river, and carried travellers over on his horse's back, if they paid him, promised to carry Deianira over. But the Centaur was a villain, and wanted to carry off Deianira, and run with her into the mountains. Hercules shot an arrow at him, one of those that was poisoned with the blood of the Hydra, and the miscreant died; but before he died he told Deianira to take the blood out of his wound, and when she thought that Hercules loved her no longer, to pour it on a robe that Hercules was to wear, and then he would again love her very dearly. The miscreant did this to avenge himself, and it was a great misfortune that Deianira believed him, and took the blood, and told Hercules nothing about it.

Parnassus and Cæta are great chains of mountains, which consist of many mountains, between which there are valleys, like the ranges of hills which you see behind Tivoli. In this chain of mountains lived the Dorians, who were a small but very brave people, and were at war with another people that was far more numerous, and was called Dryopes. The name of the king of the Dorians was Ægimius, and he had heard that Hercules came to help and assist those who were

too weak to defend themselves against the stronger, who did them wrong; he therefore asked him to aid his people and himself against the Dryopes. This Hercules did willingly and beat the Dryopes, and made them so weak, that after this the Dorians dwelt on their mountains in peace and quiet. Œgimius was old, and had no children, and for this reason he decreed that Hercules should be king of the Dorians after his death: the Dorians were very well pleased with this, and under the Heraclides, from a small and weak people, they came to be a great and mighty one.

After this war Hercules went to Trachin, and lived there with Deianira and his children with good old king Ceyx, and rested a long time from his labours. Then he made a proclamation throughout Greece, that he purposed to make an expedition; and when this was done, there came brave men from all quarters and cities to fight under his command. When his host was assembled he went with it across the sea, which is very narrow between Trachin and Eubæa, to this island, and waged war against Eurytus. Eurytus and his sons fell in the battle, Œchalia was taken, and Hercules carried Iole with the rest of the captives to Trachin. He proposed to give her to his eldest son Hyllus to wife: but wicked people told Deianira that he intended to put her away, and marry Iole himself, and Deianira was marvellously troubled at this.

Hercules did not go straight to Trachin, but he wished first to offer a sacrifice on account of the victory to Jupiter, at the foot of mount Æta, and as people arranged themselves for the sacrifice in clean white garments, and his clothes had been stained with blood and soiled in the war, he sent his servant home to Trachin to fetch clean new clothes. Then unfortunately Deianira thought of the wicked counsel of Nessus, and spread some of his blood on a shirt which she sent to Hercules by the servant, and he put it on. As soon



as the shirt was warm on his body, it stuck to his skin, and the poison burned Hercules intolerably; he would have torn it off but it stuck fast, and the poison had already penetrated his body, and Hercules felt that he must die. Then he cut down trees, and laid them one upon another, and placed himself upon the funeral pile, and desired his friends to set fire to it. There was near him a youth named Philocletes, the son of a friend of his; this youth Hercules was very fond of, and he was very obedient to him. Hercules gave him his bow and his arrows, and commanded him to set fire to the funeral pile; and the youth obeyed, although he was very grieved to do it. Thus all the sorrows and troubles of Hercules were surmounted. For when the funeral pile began to burn, there came a storm, and a cloud fell upon the funeral pile, amid thunder and lightning, and received the soul of Hercules and carried it to Olympus: his body was consumed. When his soul reached Olympus, Jupiter changed him into a god, and Jupiter and all the gods who had always loved him dearly, greeted and embraced him, and even Juno, who had been his enemy, was now kind to him, and gave him her beautiful daughter Hebe to wife: and in all countries where Hercules had done good, and rooted out tyrants or fierce beasts, men thought of him with gratitude throughout all time, and spoke of him with great honour; and now that so many thousand of years have passed away, men still speak of him with praise and love; but the base Eurystheus is hated and despised.

## THE HERACLEIDS AND ORESTES.

EURYSTHEUS was so wicked that after the death of Hercules he persecuted his children and tried to destroy them; for he knew well that they would one day punish him for all the evil he had done to their father, who durst not avenge himself. The old King Ægimius could not protect them, and they fled to Athens. Then Eurystheus marched with a great host against Athens, and desired that they would give the Heracleids up to him: but the Athenians and their King Theseus were good and noble, and would rather venture everything than act so basely. Iolaus, Hercules' friend, was already dead, and heard in the lower world that the children of his friend were in danger: so he besought Pluto to let him be alive again only for one day, and to return to the upper world to defend them. Pluto permitted this, and in the great battle, the Athenians conquered, and Iolaus himself slew Eurystheus, and afterwards went back again to the lower world: the Heracleids went again to King Ægimius, and when he was dead, Hyllus was king of the Dorians in his stead.

The ancestors of Alcmena had been kings of Argos, and Hercules had a right to be king of this country, and after him his sons and descendants. After Eurystheus was dead, Hyllus tried with his Dorians to conquer the Peloponnesus, but he did not succeed, for he lost his life in single combat with Echemus, king of Arcadia, and his son Cleodæus had to return with the Dorians to their country by Par-nassus. Peloponnesus is a peninsula; that is, the sea flows

round about it, as round an island, except in one place, where a neck of land leads from the Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, which is not broader than from Ponte Malle to Capo di Bore. This neck of land is called the Isthmus, and it is a high range of mountains, over which there is no path, but the path lies at the foot of the mountains, on the sea-shore, and is so narrow that a few people could defend it, and if others stand above on the mountains, and throw down stones, nobody can pass along this narrow road. Peloponnesus is a large country, full of high mountains, and on many of them the snow and ice lie even in summer, for they are nearly as high as the Alps; besides, they are full of great woods, or pastures; and the valleys are very fruitful, and there grows much corn in the country, and olives, and grapes; and there were many fine cities in the Peloponnesus, Sparta, Argos, Mycenæ, Tiryns, Corinth, Pylus, and many others besides.

After the death of Hyllus, his son Cleodæusa, marched once more against the Isthmus, and could not force his way into the Peloponnesus, neither after his death could his son Aristomachus. He had three sons, Temenus, Cresphontes and Aristodemus. They did not lose heart, because their great grandfather and grandfather, and father had not succeeded, and remembered that their great great grandfather, Hercules, had to undergo much toil to obtain great honour, but they armed a host anew, and the Dorians were very ready to go with them, for their country was small and not fruitful, and if their kings conquered Peloponnesus, they who had gone with them would obtain a large and fine country. First however, the three Heracleids asked the oracle at Delphi what they should do, that they might succeed better than their ancestors. Apollo answered that they must take as their guide a man with three eyes. This appeared to them very strange, and they were afraid that they should never find a man with three eyes: but as they went away from

Delphi, they met Oxylus of Ætolia, who left his country because without intending it he had killed another with the *discus* or quoit. Oxylus had only one eye, for he had lost the other by an arrow, and he rode upon a mule that had two sound eyes. Then the Heracleids guessed that the oracle had bidden them take him as their guide, and they were right too. For Oxylus told them that their ancestors had not done wisely in attacking the Isthmus, but they must build ships and go over the sea: then the kings of the Peloponnesus would not know where they would land, and therefore could not withstand them. So the Heracleids marched with all their host to the shore, which lies over against the northern coast of the Peloponnesus, where the sea is very narrow. On the mountains are many trees, which they cut down, and sawed in pieces, and built themselves boats, and the very large trees they only hollowed out, and so they made boats of them. The place where they made their vessels was afterwards called in consequence, Naupactus, and now it is called Lepanto, and 250 years ago the Christians on the sea before Lepanto defeated and destroyed a large Turkish fleet, with which the Turks intended to attack Italy, and Italy would have been conquered if the fleet had not been destroyed. The kings and nations in the Peloponnese were not united among themselves: for the Ionians, who lived on the coast opposite Naupactus, and the Arcadians, who lived in the middle of the Peninsula, made peace with the Heracleids and the Dorians, and allowed them to march through their territory, and this was very foolish, and did them much harm, as you shall afterwards hear.

Menelaus had died without leaving a son behind him to inherit his kingdom, for Helen had only one daughter, Hermione; and Megapenthes was the son of a bond-woman. Agamemnon, who was king of Mycenæ, and had led the Greeks in the war against Troy, as general of all the Greek kings, had a son Orestes: he was still very young,

when his father, on his return from Troy, was murdered by his adulterous wife, Clytemnestra and Ægisthus: and Ægisthus would have killed the boy likewise, but his sister Electra, who was older than he was, concealed him, and sent him away with a trusty servant to the land of Phocis, to a friend of her father's, whose name was Strophius. He told nobody that the boy was Orestes, for he was afraid lest the wicked Ægisthus should send murderers to assassinate the boy. Strophius had a son whose name was Pylades; he was very good, and Orestes was brought up with him, and learned every thing the same as he did: the boys were marvellously fond of each other, and were never happy but when they were together, and when they grew up, they were still greater friends; and men say of two friends who are so fond of each other, that each only thinks how he can please the other, and does everything for him, and ventures his life for him, that they are as great friends, and are as fond of each other as Orestes and Pylades: and men say this even to this day. Both were tall, strong, and brave.

When Orestes was grown up to be a man, he went to Delphi, and asked the Oracle what he should do to recover his father's kingdom: and the Oracle bade him avenge his father's death on Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, and he was to do this without an army, but was to make use of a stratagem. Then he arose to go to Mycenæ, and his faithful friend Pylades accompanied him, and the old servant who had brought him while a boy to Strophius. Orestes and Pylades hid themselves near the city in a tomb; and the old servant, whom nobody any longer knew, came into the palace as a stranger and a traveller, and told Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, that Orestes had been overturned in his chariot in the chariot race at Delphi, and was dead. They believed this, and his mother Clytemnestra was so wicked that she rejoiced at it: for her conscience told her that she deserved to be killed by her son, as the murderer of his father: and she and Ægisthus

purposed to make a feast, because they had no longer cause to fear vengeance. After this, Orestes likewise, and Pylades came to the city, and desired to speak with the king and the queen, that they might tell them still more about the way in which Orestes had lost his life : and when they were admitted they stabbed them both. Now, although Orestes had killed his mother at the command of the Oracle, yet Apollo himself and Minerva could not protect him from the Eumenides. The Eumenides were dreadful goddesses who came with snakes and burning torches, and pursued those who had killed their parents, brothers and sisters or friends, and when Orestes saw them, he was seized with dreadful anguish and fled : but the Eumenides kept pursuing him, but Pylades and his sister did not abandon the unhappy Orestes, and shared all his misery with him. At last Orestes fled to Athens to the temple of Minerva, and Minerva did not suffer the Eumenides to torment him there ; and she and Apollo persuaded the Eumenides that the Judges of the Areopagus should decide whether Orestes had done right or not in murdering his mother, as Apollo had commanded him to do so, and he could not otherwise avenge his father. The Judges were twelve, and there stood before them an urn, and each Judge had a white and black pebble ; he who considered the accused guilty, threw in the black pebble, and he who found him innocent, the white one. Six Judges had declared Orestes innocent, because he obeyed the gods, and avenged his father, and six guilty, because Clytemnestra was still his mother : but when the urn was turned round, and the pebbles were taken out, Minerva and Apollo performed a miracle, and there appeared seven white pebbles, that is, one more than had been put in : and so Orestes was acquitted, and the dreadful Eumenides durst not appear to him any more. After this Orestes and Pylades wandered a long time through many lands, that Orestes might atone for the murder, and Pylades never forsook him : but Electra returned to Argos.

Orestes and Pylades went even to the Taurians, who lived on a peninsula in the Black sea, which sea the Greeks called the Pontus Euxinus. It is a large sea, on one side of which lie countries that belong to Europe, and on the other side they belong to Asia, and near Constantinople there runs a kind of broad river into another little sea, called the Propontis, and from the Propontis, again another strait towards the Mediterranean sea, round about which in Europe, lie Greece, Italy, France, and Spain; and in Asia, Anatolia and Syria; and in Africa, Egypt and Libya. The Peninsula of the Taurians was called the Tauric Chersonnesus, and is a very beautiful and fruitful land: but the Taurians were a savage and cruel people, who sacrificed to Diana all the strangers who came to them: few, however, came there of their own accord, but many were thrown on their coast by shipwreck; for in the Pontus Euxinus there are very violent storms, and sailing is very dangerous.

Orestes and Pylades were brought to the priestess of Diana, for her to sacrifice them, and when this priestess saw that they were Greeks, she was sore troubled, for she herself was a Greek; and she asked them who they were, and who their parents were. Then Orestes said he was the son of the unhappy King Agamemnon. When the priestess heard this she embraced him, and told him that she was his sister Iphigenia, whom Orestes believed to be dead.

And it had happened thus. When the Greeks marched against Troy, the ships of the fleet were gathered at the haven of Aulis in Boeotia: and when they were all together and wanted to sail away, the wind was always against them, so that they could not leave the haven and put to sea. Then the soothsayer Calchas, declared that Diana was offended with Agamemnon on account of a sacrifice, and that the wind would not change, and the fleet would never reach Troy, if Agamemnon did not sacrifice his eldest daughter, Iphigenia. Agamemnon did not wish it, but would rather

have given up the war, and have allowed all the Greek princes to go home with their forces; but the Greeks would not because it would be against their honour, and so they compelled Agamemnon to yield. Iphigenia herself resolved to offer herself freely as a sacrifice, that the honour of her nation might not be wounded, if Paris and the Trojans remained unpunished. When Iphigenia crowned with fillets, like a victim, was led to the altar, Diana covered her and the altar with a dark cloud, and when this disappeared, the Greeks saw instead of Iphigenia a white roe, which was sacrificed to Diana: and therefore the wind was immediately favourable, and the Greeks went all on board, and sailed safely to Troy. But Diana carried Iphigenia through the air to the country of the Taurians, and made her priestess in her temple.

When Iphigenia and Orestes knew that they were brother and sister, they thought how they might fly together, and Iphigenia prayed to Diana, and she commanded the king of the Taurians to let them depart, and so Iphigenia came again to Mycenæ with Orestes, and from that time she remained quietly in her own country. Pylades married Electra, and remained with her at his friend's: and Orestes married Hermione, his cousin, the daughter of his uncle Menelaus, and when Menelaus was conveyed to the Elysian fields, Orestes inherited his kingdom Lacedæmon, so that he was at once king of Lacedæmon and Mycenæ, and after his death, his son Tisamenus ruled; and he was king, when the Heracleids with the Dorians came into the Peloponnesus. Tisamenus went with his Achæans against the Heracleids, but he was beaten, and the Heracleids made themselves masters of all his kingdom. Then Tisamenus led all the Achæans who would not be subjects of the Dorians, against the Ionians, who had let the Heracleids and their Dorians march through their country, and drove them out of their country, and lived there with his Achæans, and the country was called after them Achaia until the Turks subdued



Greece. This was the punishment of the Ionians for letting a strange people come into the Peloponnesus, without endeavouring to defend themselves.

The Dorians had three kings when they made ready at Naupactus to cross over to the Peloponnesus, Temenus, Cresphontes and Aristodemus: they were all Heracleids and brothers, and sons of the great grandson of Hercules; that is, Hercules was the grandfather of their father. Aristodemus was struck by lightning, and left two sons, Eurysthenes and Procles: their guardian was their mother's brother, and they were still little children. When the Dorians had conquered the kingdom of Tisamenus and also the kingdom of Pylus, they would not live under one king, but in three kingdoms, and divided the country into three kingdoms, Argos, Lacedæmon, and Messene. Messene, however, was the most beautiful, and all would have liked it best, and they could not agree who should have it, and therefore they resolved to draw lots. They settled that he whose name was first drawn out of the urn should have Argos, and he whose name was drawn next, Lacedæmon, and the third Messene. At that time there was little paper, and people wrote on pieces of broken earthenware, and so Temenus wrote his name on such a piece, and Theras, the uncle of Eurysthenes and Procles, wrote their names on another, and Cresphontes his name on a third; and the three pieces were put into a vessel with water, and a priest was to take out one after the other. But Cresphontes had not written his name on a piece of baked clay, which does not dissolve in the water, but on a piece of dried earth, that went to pieces in the water, as if you were to throw a piece of dry earth into the water jug; and so he who had to draw out the pieces did not find it, but drew first the piece of Temenus, and then that of the sons of Aristodemus, and so Temenus got Argos, and the Aristodemidæ Lacedæmon, and Cresphontes Mes-

sene. But in consequence of this trick the kings of Lacedæmon and the descendants of Cresphontes were always enemies.

Cresphontes had a wicked brother named Polyphontes, who wished to be king : so he murdered him and all his children, except one boy, whose name was *Æpytus*. His mother Merope concealed him, and sent him to a friend of her murdered husband, who lived in *Ætolia*. *Ætolia* is a large country in Greece, on the river Achelous. At this friend's *Æpytus* grew up, and was educated ; and his mother often sent the old servant who had taken him there to *Ætolia* to hear how her son got on, and whether he was safe and sound. *Æpytus* heard from this friend and from the old servant that his uncle had murdered his father Cresphontes, and he resolved to avenge his father : and when he was old and strong enough, he went away from *Ætolia*, and told no one before he went away what he thought of doing ; and this we should never do when we wish to accomplish any thing great and dangerous. He went through Achaia and Elis to Messene, and sent in his name to King Polyphontes, and told him that he was an *Ætolian* who had killed young *Æpytus*, whom Polyphontes feared just as much as *Ægisthus* did *Orestes*, and he said likewise that he came to ask a reward for this. Polyphontes rejoiced greatly, and promised him a great reward and told him that he should live in his palace, as long as he remained in Messene. And therefore he made it known that on the morrow he would make a great feast, because he had received very glad tidings. Merope heard that her son's murderer was in the palace, and on the very same day the old servant, whom she had sent again to *Ætolia*, had come back, and told her that *Æpytus* was not there, and that nobody knew where he was gone. She therefore thought it quite certain that her son was killed, and that the stranger really was his murderer ; and she wept passionately, and tore her hair

She ran all over the palace disconsolate, and there saw Æpytus asleep in a gallery, for he was very weary from travelling, and as she did not know him, for he was a little boy when he was sent away, and was now a tall youth, she seized a dagger and would have stabbed him to the heart: but fortunately there came by the old servant, and recognized Æpytus, and told the mother that the stranger was her son. Then Merope threw herself upon him and kissed him, and he awoke, and the old servant told him that this woman was his dear mother, and then he embraced her, and all wept for joy, and concerted how they might take vengeance on Polyphontes. The next morning the tyrant had got every thing ready for a great feast and sacrifice, and had the stranger summoned to accompany him; and he was so awfully impious that he gave orders that Merope also should be present at the feast. Æpytus walked beside Polyphontes, and requested the honour of offering a bull himself. Polyphontes offered a whole hecatomb. Then the tyrant stood beside him, and Æpytus struck him on the head with the axe, instead of striking the bull; and Merope cried to the guards and the people, this is my son Æpytus, your king, who has avenged his father Cresphontes, who was your good king. The people had dearly loved Cresphontes, and hated his murderer; and so all immediately hailed Æpytus king, and his descendants reigned after him as kings over Messene, and were called the Æpytidæ.

The sons of Aristodemus, Eurysthenes, and Procles, were little children when the Heracleids conquered the Peloponnesus, and their uncle Theras reigned for them till they were grown up. Both were kings of Sparta together, and as both had descendants, there were always two kings together at Sparta. Cresphontes had treated the Messenians very well, but the sons of Aristodemus treated the inhabitants of Laconia very harshly, and made them subjects of the Dorians

who had come with them, so that the Dorians alone had the command, and took from the old inhabitants many fields and other land. This made the inhabitants of the great city Helos rise against them, and many other Laconians joined them; but King Agis, the son of Eurysthenes, overpowered them, and destroyed the city of Helos: and all the Laconians who had taken arms against the Spartans were made bond-slaves; they were obliged to give the Spartans every year, half of all the produce of the lands they cultivated, and if a Spartan killed a Helot he was not punished for it: they might have no weapons but slings and javelins when the Spartans made them go with them to war.

THE END.











